

105 Point Street House (Stone House Museum)
105 Point Street
Saltsburg
Indiana County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5419

HABS
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32-SALT,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

105 POINT STREET HOUSE
(Stone House Museum)

HABS No. PA-5419

- Location: 105 Point St., Saltsburg, Conemaugh Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania.
- Present Owner: Saltsburg Area Branch, Historical and Geneological Society of Indiana County.
- Present Use: Historical museum.
- Significance: This five-bay stone dwelling is located on what was a prominent and important block--between the canal and the river--during the years when the canal was built. As one of the few stone buildings extant in Saltsburg that also maintains its architectural integrity, the material reflects a tradition of Pennsylvania-German construction as well as that associated with the development of a canal structure.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1830.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands, historically lot No. 12. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds Office of the County of Indiana, Pennsylvania.

The deed chain is unclear and undocumented during the earliest and most significant years.

1839 Sold at auction; seller and buyer unknown.

1841 Robert McIlwain or Valentine Blank, owner.

1855 R. McWilliams, owner.

1868-71 Dr. J.L. Crawford, owner.

1891 Deed May 12, 1891, no volume or page given.
J.M. Robinson
TO
H.P. Lewis

1891 Deed September 4, 1891, Volume B55, Page 450-53.
H.P. Lewis
TO
John Robinson, John Stewart, et al.

1891 Will Book, Volume 11, Page 129.
J. Robinson (d. 1900), J. Stewart (d. 1897), et al.
TO
Nannie H. Robinson

1917 Deed February 9, 1917, Volume 154, Page 591.
Nannie Robinson, et al.
TO
George W. Martin

3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located, although the building was originally composed only of the five-bay, rectangular stone block.
4. Alterations and additions: A gable-roofed, one-story rear ell has historically existed off the rear/west facade; a cinder-block construction addition was made to the one-story frame ell in 1988.

- B. Historical context: Tax records from 1841 indicate that Robert McIlwain, reputed to have been the first merchant to arrive in Saltsburg, in 1831, may have been the first owner of the house. He went into a partnership with William McIlwain that may have included various other properties he is known to have been involved with--a warehouse, store, and another dwelling. William continued in the business until 1875 (Stewart, 503).

Cabinetmaker Robert McWilliams was the owner of 105 Point St. at mid-century. By at least 1871, he was succeeded by Dr. J.L. Crawford, whose small, detached office was just to the east at 107 Point St. Crawford, who moved to Saltsburg in 1868, served in the Civil War until he was wounded and

discharged.

For additional context, twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg may be consulted, as well as overview histories of the town of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666). See also, Sara Amy Leach, ed., Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (Washington, DC: Historica American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This simple five-bay, two-story, interpretation of Federal styling is typical of a Pennsylvania-German stone dwelling type.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: About 45' x 20', with a 20' x 25' rear addition (Sanborns).
2. Foundation: Stone; partially banked.
3. Walls: Stone laid in random courses with the heaviest stones at the base, becoming smaller up the height of the building; the corners feature large, dressed quoins of stone.
4. Structural system: Load-bearing stone.
5. Porches, stoops: Two steps lead to the central, recessed entrance.
6. Chimneys: Interior brick chimneys at each gable end; the west chimney is topped by a chimney pot installed later. There is a third interior brick chimney in the north gable-end wall of the rear ell.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance is located in the central

bay of the south Point Street facade. The single wood door is recessed deep in the thick stone structure; it features a pair of elongated, round-arched glazed openings, below which are two recessed panels defined by heavy moldings. The rectangular transom above is plain; the surrounding architrave trim is wide but unadorned.

- b. Windows: Two-over-two-light double-hung sash windows are installed across the five-bays, which feature plain wood lintels, sills, and surrounds.
- 8. Roof: Shape, covering, eaves: Side-gable roof with average, boxed wood cornice, covered with decorative slate shingles.

C. Site:

- 1. General setting: The site is flat and the building oriented toward the south side of Point Street. On its west and east flanks are additional dwellings, and to the north and rear is an alley.
- 2. Outbuildings: A frame stable existed behind the house by 1891; it is gone.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old Views and maps:

The collection of the Saltsburg Branch, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Stone House Museum, contains numerous historical images.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Indiana County. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1871.

Johnson, George B., and Palmer, Ann. Saltsburg--The Way It Was--An Appreciation. Indiana, Pa.: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1986.

Peelor, David, and Barker, W. "Map of Indiana County, Pennsylvania." North Hector, New York: 1856.

"Saltsburg, Pa." New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. Ltd., February 1886; New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., October 1891, January 1897, July 1903; New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1909, February 1927.

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Indiana County, Pennsylvania, deed books and tax records.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Arms, C.T., and White, E. 1745-1880, History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Newark, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1880.

Berringer, Gloria, ed. Canal Days Sesquicentennial: 1838-1988. No publisher, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Philadelphia: John M. Gresham and Co., 1891; reprinted 1982.

Johnson, George. Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal. Historic Saltsburg, 1984.

McCullough, Robert, and Leuba, Walter. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. York, Pa.: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1973.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory, "Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: Indiana and Westmoreland Counties." 1979/82.

Stewart, J.T. Indiana County, Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present. Chicago: F.W. Beers and Co., 1913.

Wallner, Peter A. "Politics and Public Works: A Study of the Pennsylvania Canal System, 1825-1857." Ph.D diss., Pennsylvania State University, June 1973.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Kristin Belz, University of Virginia. Large-

format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg, an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Alexandria (Huntingdon County) and an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).